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HOUSE BILL NO. 1074

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 12, 2022

A BILL to amend and reenact § 3.2-6521 of the Code of Virginia, relating to exemption from rabies vaccination; titer test; certification.

Patron—Leftwich

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 3.2-6521 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 3.2-6521. Rabies inoculation of companion animals; availability of certificate; rabies clinics.**

A. The owner or custodian of all dogs and cats four months of age and older shall have such animal currently vaccinated for rabies by a licensed veterinarian or licensed veterinary technician who is under the immediate and direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian on the premises unless otherwise provided by regulations. The supervising veterinarian on the premises shall provide the owner or custodian of the dog or the cat with a rabies vaccination certificate or herd rabies vaccination certificate and shall keep a copy in his own files. The owner or custodian of the dog or the cat shall furnish within a reasonable period of time, upon the request of an animal control officer, humane investigator, law-enforcement officer, State Veterinarian's representative, or official of the Department of Health, the certificate of vaccination for such dog or cat. The vaccine used shall be licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for use in that species. At the discretion of the local health director, a medical record from a licensed veterinary establishment reflecting a currently vaccinated status may serve as proof of vaccination.

B. All rabies clinics require the approval by the appropriate local health department and governing body. The licensed veterinarian who administers rabies vaccinations at the clinic shall (i) provide the owner or custodian a rabies vaccination certificate for each vaccinated animal and (ii) ensure that a licensed veterinary facility retains a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate. The sponsoring organization of a rabies clinic shall, upon the request of the owner or custodian, an animal control officer, a humane investigator, a law-enforcement officer, a State Veterinarian's representative, a licensed veterinarian, or an official of the Department of Health, provide the name and contact information of the licensed veterinary facility where a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate is retained. However, the county or city shall ensure that a clinic is conducted to serve its jurisdiction at least once every two years.

C. Vaccination subsequent to a summons to appear before a court for failure to do so shall not operate to relieve such owner from the penalties or court costs provided under § 16.1-69.48:1 or 17.1-275.7.

D. 1. The Board of Health shall, by regulation, provide an exemption to the requirements of subsection A if an animal suffers from an underlying medical condition that is likely to result in a life-threatening condition in response to vaccination and such exemption would not risk public health and safety. For the purposes of § 3.2-6522, such exemption shall mean that the animal is considered not currently vaccinated for rabies. For the purposes of §§ 3.2-5902, 3.2-6526, and 3.2-6527, such exemption shall be considered in place of a current certificate of vaccination.

2. The Board of Health shall, by regulation, provide an exemption to the requirements of subsection A if a licensed veterinarian has examined an animal, certifies in writing that at the time of the examination, vaccination would endanger an animal's health because of its age, infirmity, disability, illness, or other medical consideration, and a titer test has indicated sufficient immunity to rabies. Certification that the animal is exempt from vaccination pursuant to this subdivision shall be valid for a period of one year from the date of the certification. For the purposes of § 3.2-6522, 3.2-5902, 3.2-6526, and 3.2-6527, such certification shall mean that the animal is considered vaccinated for rabies and the certification shall be considered in place of a current certificate of vaccination.

INTRODUCED

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